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## **CALIFORNIA AHEAD OF SCHEDULE FOR LAKE TAHOE RESTORATION**

*State Hits 82% of Ten-Year Commitment in Only 6 Years*

**SACRAMENTO** – A presentation by state agencies on Sunday, August 10 will disclose that California has now reached 82 per cent—\$254.5 million—of its total ten-year funding commitment to improve Lake Tahoe’s environment in only six years. The presentation will also reveal that 119 separate projects and programs were completed or underway resulting in dozens of miles of new trails and erosion control measures, along with the restoration of 1,700 acres of wetlands and habitat, and improved public access to the lake.

“Preserving and protecting Lake Tahoe’s environment and water clarity is important not only for future generations of Californians,” said Winston Hickox, Secretary for the California Environmental Protection Agency, “but for the millions of tourists from California and around the world, who are drawn to its shores.”

Since assuming office, Governor Davis has continually placed a priority on funding the preservation and restoration of the Lake Tahoe Basin. In 2003, Governor Davis proposed, and the Legislature approved, an additional \$28.8 million in funds from Propositions 12 and 40, for the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program (EIP.)

California has committed \$240 million to date for property acquisition and improvement projects, and has earmarked an additional \$5.4 million for research and monitoring to support restoration activities.

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The presentation by state officials at Tahoe City will be made to the California Lake Tahoe Interagency Council that includes the Resources Agency, Cal/EPA, Business, Transportation and Housing Agency (BT&H) and ten separate State departments.

State activities at Lake Tahoe include the following accomplishments:

- Preservation of more than 728 acres of land (including the purchase of one of the largest wetlands in the Sierra range, at the mouth of the Upper Truckee River, the source of one-third of Tahoe's stream inflow).
- Construction of 79 miles of erosion control measures.
- Restoration of 985 acres of land for water quality and wildlife habitat purposes.
- Restoration of 8.7 miles of rivers and streams.
- Construction of 34.5 miles of new trails.
- Improvement of public access to 62 acres of lakefront.
- Reduction of fuels and fire hazards on over 1,400 parcels.
- 80-95% reduction of toluene and MTBE pollution in Lake Tahoe.
- Availability of MTBE-free gasoline at Lake Tahoe, and clean-up of 54 underground tank sites which are contaminating groundwater with MTBE.
- Reduced the amount of salt by 81% and sand by 76%, and a total cessation of all slushing (spreading of snow on roads to melt) in snow-removal operations in the Basin.

Adopted in 1998, the 10-year Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP) commits state, federal, and local partners to coordination, and cooperation in the funding of projects and resource allocation to address a broad range of environmental concerns from public access and erosion control to dying forests. The ultimate goal is to improve the water quality of Lake Tahoe, whose world-renowned clarity was being lost at the rate of approximately one-foot per year. Clarity of the lake's waters has improved by seven feet over the past year.

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